

# The Man Who Loved Only Numbers: The Story of Paul Erdos and the Search for Mathematical Truth Read Online

## Book info:

**Author:** *Paul Hoffman*

**Format:** *320 pages*

**Dimensions:** *128 x 196mm*

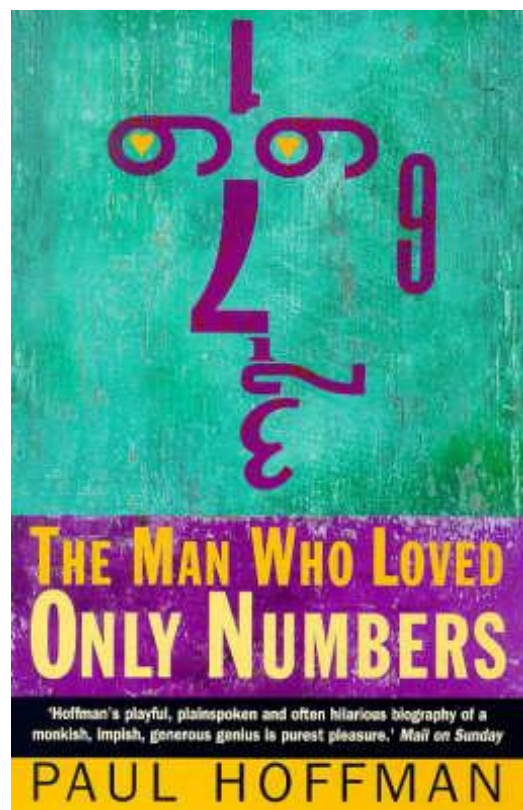
**Publication date:** *03 Jun 1999*

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## Book Synopsis:

The biography of a mathematical genius. Paul Erdos was the most prolific pure mathematician in history and, arguably, the strangest too.

'A mathematical genius of the first order, Paul Erdos was totally obsessed with his subject - he thought and wrote mathematics for nineteen hours a day until he died. He travelled constantly, living out of a plastic bag and had no interest in food, sex, companionship, art - all that is usually indispensable to a human life. Paul Hoffman, in this marvellous biography, gives us a vivid and strangely moving portrait of this singular creature, one that brings out not only Erdos's genius and his oddness, but his warmth and sense of fun, the joyfulness of his strange life.' Oliver Sacks

For six decades Erdos had no job, no hobbies, no wife, no home; he never learnt to cook, do laundry, drive a car and died a virgin. Instead he travelled the world with his mother in tow, arriving at the doorstep of esteemed mathematicians declaring 'My brain is open'. He travelled until his death at 83, racing across four continents to prove as many theorems as possible, fuelled by a diet of espresso and amphetamines. With more than 1,500 papers

written or co-written, a daily routine of 19 hours of mathematics a day, seven days a week, Paul Erdos was one of the most extraordinary thinkers of our times.

## **Additional Info:**

### **Review quote**

"Hoffman's playful, plainspoken and often hilarious biography of a monkish, impish, generous genius is purest pleasure." Mail on Sunday "Paul Hoffman's wittily articulated life of the mathematical genius Paul Erdos opens a door to a sunlit upland of pure logic, populated by bungee-bouncing, bearded maniacs and absurdly intelligent men who never learnt to tie their own shoelaces...Anyone with an interest in the science of numbers should read this." Observer "The Man Who Loved Only Numbers is one of the most accessible and engaging introductions to the world of pure mathematics you are ever likely to come across." Graham Farmelo, Sunday Telegraph "A wonderful, playful, insightful life of this century's most unusual mathematician." Ian Stewart, Independent

### **About Paul Hoffman**

Paul Hoffman is publisher of Encyclopaedia Britannica and the science correspondent for The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer on US TV.